

2010-2011 ANNUAL REPORT

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In 2010-2011, the Supreme Court Advocacy Institute completed its fourth full Supreme Court of Canada term, during which it continued to provide counsel appearing for argument before the Court with rigorous practice sessions. The Institute's advocacy program aims to increase the effectiveness and quality of advocacy before the Court by simulating for counsel the experience of oral argument before the highest court. A panel of seasoned Supreme Court advocates listens to counsel's argument and offers candid and constructive feedback to help maximize counsel's opportunity to present an informative and effective oral submissions.

During the 2010-11 year, the Institute provided free, non-partisan advocacy sessions in approximately 31% of cases before the Supreme Court of Canada, tracking the average in achieved in the 2009-10 Court term. Counsel from both government and private practice used the Institute's advocacy program in a wide array of civil and criminal appeals, including constitutional cases. During some Court sessions, the Institute organized practice panels for more than half of cases from a given province. In particular, we are pleased to report that the Institute provided advocacy sessions in 36% of appeals from Quebec and 44% of appeals from Alberta, a significant year-on-year increase.

Counsel making use of the Institute in 2010-11 included seasoned advocates as well as first time counsel before the Court. Counsel from British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec relied on the Institute as part of their preparations (the Court heard few cases from the Atlantic provinces).

Forty-one (41) lawyers donated their time as advocacy advisors for their colleagues, offering advice based on their own experience before the Court. Many participated in more than one session, illustrating the commitment of our advocacy advisors to the bar and to the public. The Institute recently expanded its roster in each region to accommodate the increasing demand for its advocacy program.

We estimate that since 2006, the Institute's advocacy advisors, committee members, and executive directors have collectively contributed over \$1,300,000 of *pro bono* services to the benefit of parties and their counsel before the Supreme Court of Canada. We continue to receive positive feedback from counsel who have used the Institute's advocacy program and on the preparation of our advisors for practice sessions.

The Institute revised its Guidelines for Applications for Leave to Appeal on its

webpage, providing counsel seeking leave to the Supreme Court of Canada with an overview of the procedural and substantive requirements for the memorandum of argument. The Institute is also exploring possibilities for obtaining continuing professional development accreditation for its advocacy advisors and counsel participating in a session.

The Institute remains in a good financial position. The Institute's low-cost operations – due to the willingness of all members to donate their time on a *pro bono* basis – ensure the sustainability of our programs. In the course of the 2011-12 term, the Institute will seek out additional funding for its activities.

Finally, the Institute congratulates Michael J. Wood, Q.C., outgoing chair of the Atlantic provinces regional committee, on his nomination to the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. The loss to the Bar and to the Institute is aptly compensated by the gain to the bench.